



TRANSLATION STRATEGIES OF CULTURAL  
WORDS AND THEIR READABILITIES IN *THE*  
*HUNGER GAMES* BY SUZANNE COLLINS

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BY:

Liem Galih Natalia

Raden Arief Nugroho

ENGLISH DEPARTEMENT, FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DIAN NUSWANTORO UNIVERSITY SEMARANG

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## TRANSLATION STRATEGIES OF CULTURAL WORDS AND THEIR READABILITIES IN *THE HUNGER GAMES* BY SUZANNE COLLINS

Liem Galih Natalia and Raden Arief Nugroho  
English Department, Dian Nuswantoro University

### ABSTRACT

*In translation, there are some words that are hard to be translated caused by some cultural backgrounds. Those words are called as the cultural words. This research elaborates on the connections among cultural word, translation strategy and readability in translation. It points out that every cultural word of the source language needs an accurate strategy to be translated into the target language. Cultural words analysis is needed to know the varieties of cultural words found in the novel. Translation strategy analysis is needed to make sure that the word never lost any cultural backgrounds. Meanwhile, the readability analysis is used to make sure that the target readers can receive the idea presented by the word in the target language and it is also used as the strategy accuracy parameter. By the collaboration of the three analysis mentioned above, the connections among cultural word, strategy and readability can be discovered. In the end, it notices that translators must be aware about the readability of cultural words in translating those words and a high readability can only be reached when a cultural word is translated by an accurate strategy.*

**Key words:** cultural word, readability level, translation strategy

*Dalam dunia penerjemahan, ada beberapa kata yang sulit untuk diterjemahkan karena latar belakang budayanya. Kata-kata itu disebut sebagai kata-kata bermuatan budaya. Penelitian ini menguraikan hubungan-hubungan yang ada di antara kata bermuatan budaya, strategi penerjemahan dan tingkat keterbacaan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa setiap kata bermuatan budaya dari bahasa sumber memerlukan strategi yang tepat saat diterjemahkan ke bahasa sasaran. Analisis kata bermuatan budaya diperlukan untuk mengetahui keaneka ragaman kata bermuatan budaya yang ditemukan dari novel. Analisis strategi penerjemahan diperlukan untuk memastikan bahwa kata bermuatan budaya yang diterjemahkan tidak kehilangan latar belakang budayanya. Sementara itu, analisis tingkat keterbacaan diperlukan untuk memastikan bahwa pembaca dapat memahami arti kata dan dipakai sebagai alat pengukur keakuratan strategi penerjemahan. Gabungan dari semua analisis di atas membuat hubungan di antara ketiganya menjadi terlihat. Pada akhirnya, dapat diketahui bahwa para penerjemah perlu memperhatikan tingkat keterbacaan saat menerjemahkan kata-kata bermuatan budaya dan tingkat keterbacaan tinggi hanya bisa didapat apabila kata bermuatan budaya diterjemahkan dengan strategi yang akurat.*

**Kata Kunci:** kata bermuatan budaya, strategi penerjemahan, tingkat keterbacaan

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, translation is becoming a popular thing in many sectors of life, such as: education, entertainment, economy, and many more. Translated books are the example of translation products which have assorted types and come from many sectors, for example: medical books, science books, novels, and many more. Translators play an important role to transfer the idea from the source language into the target language. In transferring the idea, translators need some strategies to face with a number of translation problems.

In translation, some words in the source language cannot be replaced into the target language as caused by the cultural background of those words. Those words are called by cultural words (Newmark, 1998: 95-103). The cultural words such as: traditional foods, local animal or plant names, and places will be hard to be translated into the target text. It is because the meaning for the cultural words is not available in the target language. The cultural word problems in translation mostly cause some failures of idea delivery in the target language.

The subject of analysis for this research is a novel entitled *The Hunger Games*. It is a best seller novel written by New York Times bestselling author named Suzanne Collins and published by Scholastic press. This novel becomes more popular after *The Hunger Games* film was released on March 2012. Gramedia Pustaka Utama is the publisher for the Indonesian version of *The Hunger Games* and Hetih Rusli is the translator who translates this novel from English into Indonesian language.

The researcher argues that the analysis of cultural words then must be related to the translation strategies as the solution for the cultural problems. The researcher uses *The Translator's Invisibility* theory by Venuti (1995: 1-42) in this research. It consists of two main strategies named domestication and foreignization. Domestication is a strategy which a transparent and fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers. Foreignization designates the type of translation in which a target text deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of foreignness of the original.

In this research, the researcher also uses the translation strategy theory by Vinay and Darbelnet. The reason of choosing this translation theory is because the Translator's Invisibility theory has a relationship to Vinay and Darbelnet's strategy (Zare-Behtash 2009: 1579). The theory is divided into 7 strategies, they are: borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation.

The researcher tries to relate the translation strategy to the readability level to make further analysis as compared to the previous research. Readability is about how easily written materials can be read and understood. In this research, the readability analysis uses questionnaire with some target readers. The researcher argues that the cultural words from the source language cannot be accepted if the target text has a low readability level.

## METHOD

### Research Design

Based on the research study and theory, this research simply used descriptive qualitative research method. Descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. Qualitative research is based on the qualitative measurements of some characteristics and concerned with qualitative phenomenon.

The method had used to give more space for the researcher to gain information for supporting the analysis. The data were collected from *The Hunger Games* Novel, both Indonesian and English version. Identification, questionnaire with some of the target readers, and interview with a professional translator were used for data collection and discussion analysis.

### Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis of this study was all cultural words found in *The Hunger Games* novel of both English and Indonesian version. The analysis focused on every cultural word at the level of word and phrase.

### Source of Data

Source data is the subject of analysis where the data found. In this research, the sources of data are: informant and document.

#### 1) Informant

Informant is a person who owns the information or authorized to give some responses or statement for the topic of analysis.

##### a. Questionnaire Respondent

There were 5 target readers who became the questionnaire respondents. They reviewed about the readability of the cultural words by the questionnaire form based of their own judgments. The researcher chose them as the respondents through several filtering steps based on their language (English and Indonesian) skill and translation knowledge to find the best respondents.

##### b. Interview Informant

In this research, the researcher chose a professional translator named Slamet Parsaoran Sinambela who was the only interview informant. He is an author and a translator. He is a member of Association of Indonesian Translators for 8 years. He had translated hundreds of law documents, 25 books and other translation projects. In the interview, the researcher discussed about the accuracy of translation strategy and cultural items. From the interview, the researcher got the review of cultural words and strategies accuracy and some suggestions or corrections for a better readability. The interview transcript was also used in the analysis.

#### 2) Document

Document is all of written or concrete material of the problem. The document of this analysis was divided into: novel, questionnaire, and interview transcript.

a. Novel

The researcher took the data from the novels, the Indonesian version of *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, a translated novel by Hetih Rusli and the English version of *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins as the research data. Both novels were used as the data because the translator tried to find the cultural words from both languages. The data were taken from printed book. The English version has 368 pages and the Indonesian version has 408 pages.

b. Questionnaire

Questionnaire result was the respondent response result about the readability level of the cultural words in *The Hunger Games* novel. This result made the researcher possible to analyze about the relation of cultural word translation strategies to the readability. The researcher used self administrated questionnaires as the questionnaire management method in this research. Self administrated questionnaire means that the researcher herself collected and calculated the questionnaire.

c. Interview Transcript

Transcript interview was the script of dialog between the researcher and the interview informant about the accuracy of the strategies to the cultural words and the suggestions for a better readability. This script helped the researcher to get more information and deeper understanding.

### **Techniques of Data Collection**

The steps of data collection methods were: identification, questionnaire, and interview.

1) Identification

In this step, the researcher analyzed the Indonesian version novel then compared it with the English version novel. The researcher identified every sentence in the novel to find the cultural words in both of English version and Indonesian version novel by several activities below.

1. Reading both novels.
2. Finding the cultural words in both of the novels. To justify identification, the researcher used encyclopedias, and dictionaries.
3. Grouping the words based on the source and target language.

2) Questionnaire

In this step, the questionnaire aimed to collect the reader's statements of the language in Indonesian version novel. The questionnaires consisted of several sentences which had cultural words. The respondent could only choose one level for each sentence. The readability levels were: 1) low, 2) medium, and 3) high. The questionnaire form had some space for the respondent's statements to be the additional reasons of analysis discussion. The researcher made the questionnaire by using several activities below.

1. Writing questionnaire form.
2. Choosing the respondents.
3. Collecting questionnaire result.
4. Reviewing and concluding questionnaire result.

### 3) Interview

The researcher used in-depth interview with a professional translator to review the accuracy of every cultural word and its translation strategies. The interview took place at a restaurant for the enjoyable and comfortable atmosphere. The interview process had several activities below.

1. Choosing a professional translator.
2. Interviewing the translator.
3. Reviewing and concluding the interview result.

### Techniques of Data Analysis

The interpretative approaches to the techniques of data analysis were used in this research by conducting several steps below.

- 1) Classifying the cultural words based on the cultural word classification theory.  
In this step, the researcher coded and reduced to some data which did not have cultural items.
- 2) Grouping the words into groups based on the strategies. Some reduction happened for words that were not included in the strategy groups.
- 3) Finding the reason and cultural items of each cultural word. Generation of key themes, tabulation and analysis happened in this step.
- 4) Discussing the reason related to the translation strategies.
- 5) Analyzing the readability by calculating the questionnaire results.
- 6) Finding the relationship between the translation strategy and the readability of cultural words from the novel.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Cultural Word

The cultural word classifications can be presented in the following table.

Table 1: Cultural Word Classification

No	Class			Quantity	Percentage
1	<b>Ecology</b>			30	28,04%
	Animals	Plants	Plains		
	11	17	2		
2	<b>Material culture</b>			31	28,97%
	Food	Clothes	Houses and towns		
	6	10	15		
3	<b>Social culture</b>			25	23,36%
4	<b>Organization, customs and ideas</b>			11	10,28%
	Political and administrative		Religious		
	10		1		
5	<b>Gestures and habits</b>			10	9,35%
Total				107	100%

Cultural words are words that associated with a particular language and cannot be literally translated. Based on the cultural words classification that is presented by the table above, it can be said that the largest amount of cultural word belongs to material culture. Meanwhile, the fewest amount of cultural word belongs to gestures and habits word.

### Translation Strategy

The translation strategy classifications can be presented in the following table.

Table 2: Translation Strategy Classification

2. Translation Strategy Classification					
No	Strategy			Quantity	Percentage
1	Foreignization			67	62,62%
	Borrowing		Literal translation		
	33		34		
2	Domestication			40	37,38%
	Transposition	Modulation	Adaptation		
	2	19	19		
Total				107	100%

Translation strategies can be used by the translator to solve the problems. Based on the translation strategies classification that is presented by the table above, it can be said that foreignization is more dominant than domestication.

### Readability

The readability classifications can be presented in the following table.

Table 3: Readability Classification

No	Readability level	Quantity	Percentage
1	High	84	78,50%
2	Medium	23	21,50%
Total		107	100%

Readability in translation is about how easily written materials can be read and understood. Readability is what makes some texts easier to read than others. To maximise readability is a goal that every writer, technical or otherwise, should strive to achieve. In the readability classification, the researcher shows the questionnaire respondent results. Based on that result that is presented in the table above, it can be said that the cultural words in high readability is more numerous than the cultural words in medium readability. The researcher uses questionnaire for the readability analysis.

### Connections among cultural word, translation strategy and readability

The connections among cultural word, translation strategy and readability can be presented in the following table.

Table 4: Connections among Cultural Word, Strategy and Readability

No	Class	Strategy				Q
		Foreignization		Domestication		
	Readability Level	High	Med	High	Med	
1	Ecology	21	4	1	4	30
2	Material culture	18	3	8	2	31
3	Social culture	7	1	16	1	25
4	Organization, customs and ideas	5	4	1	1	11
5	Gestures and habits	3	1	4	2	10
Total		67		40		107

The researcher combines the cultural word, strategy and readability classifications above to know the connections among them. From this analysis, it can be found that the strategy influences the readability of the cultural word. For example, an ecology word has a high readability level when it is translated by using foreignization strategy. Meanwhile, it only has a medium readability when it is translated by using domestication strategy. For more detail analysis, the connections among cultural word, translation strategy and readability can be presented in following table.

Table 5: Connections among Cultural Word, Strategy and Readability in Detail

Cultural Word Classification	Translation Strategy Classification									
	Foreignization				Domestication					
	Borrowing		Literal translation		Transposition		Modulation		Adaptation	
	High	Med	High	Med	High	Med	High	Med	High	Med
<b>Ecology</b>										
a) Animals	4	1	3			1		1		1
b) Plants	7	1	6	1					1	1
c) Plains		1	1							
<b>Material Culture</b>										
a) Food	1		1	1					2	1
b) Clothes	5	1	1		1		1		1	
c) Houses and Towns	5		5	1			1	1	2	
<b>Social Culture</b>			7	1			9		7	1
<b>Organization, customs and ideas</b>										
a) Political and administrative	3	4	1				1			1
b) Religious			1							
<b>Gestures and habits</b>			3	1			3	2	1	
<b>Total</b>	33		34		2		19		19	



From the table above, it can be said that foreignization strategy is more accurate for animals, plants, houses and towns. Foreignization is divided into borrowing and literal translation. Borrowing strategy is accurate to translate animals, plants, clothes, houses and town. However, it is less accurate for political administrative. Literal translation is accurate for animals, plants, houses and towns, social culture and some of gestures and habits.

Domestication is more accurate for social culture and gesture and habits word. It is divided into transposition, modulation and adaptation. There are only 2 words translated by transposition strategy. However, one of them only gets a medium readability level. Based on this condition, it can be said that the translators must be careful in using the transposition strategy. Modulation is accurate for social culture, because all of the text translated by this strategy gets high readability level. However, this strategy is less accurate for houses and town and gestures and habits, because there are many words (translated by modulation) only have medium readability. Adaptation is accurate for social culture words, because most of the social culture words have high readability by using this strategy.

## CONCLUSION

The purposes of this analysis are: to know the cultural words found from the novel, translation strategies that used in translating the text, readability level of every cultural words, and connection among the cultural word, translation strategy and readability.

The researcher finds 107 cultural words from the novel. Those words are classified into 5 classes. This classification is made to know about the cultural word varieties in the novel. The results of cultural word classifications are: 30 (28,04%) ecology words, 31 (28,97%) material culture words, 25 (23,36%) social culture words, 11 (10,28%) organization, customs, and idea words, and 10 (9,35%) gesture and habit words.

After classifies the cultural words, the researcher divides the words based on the translation strategy. The results of translation strategy classifications are: 67 (62,62%) foreignization strategies and 40 (37,38%) domestication strategies.

After that, the researcher also divides the words based on their readability level. The results of readability classifications are: 84 (78,50%) words at high readability and 23 (21,50%) words at medium readability.

From the connection among cultural word, strategy and readability analysis, the researcher concludes that every cultural word class requires different translation strategy. From the analysis, it can be found that foreignization is more dominant in ecology, material culture and organization customs and ideas class. Meanwhile, domestication is more dominant in social culture and gestures and habits class. The researcher also concludes that a cultural word will have a high readability level when it is translated by an accurate translation strategy.

Domestication is accurate for social culture and material culture words, the words that are translated by using domestication strategy have high readability. Foreignization strategy is accurate for ecology, material culture and social culture words, because most the words that are translated by using foreignization have high readability

Domestication is less accurate for ecology words, because 3 of 5 ecology words that are translated by using domestication strategy only have medium readability level. In translating organization, customs and ideas, translators must be aware, because there are 5 of 11 words at medium readability. The translator must be aware in using borrowing strategy for political and administrative word, because there are 4 of 7 words at medium readability level.

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